

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ARDAY:SKG

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S/S- MR. BRIDGES

S:DPASSAGE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 218121

EXDIS FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR US IS XF

SUBJECT: ISRAELI HARASSMENT OF AMOCO IN GULF OF SUEZ

REF: STATE 216313 AND STATE 216913

1. YOU SHOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO RABIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. (AS RABIN HAS NOW BEEN INVOLVED IN THIS MATTER TWICE IN THE PAST 48 HOURS--REFTELS--IT COULD BE A MISLEADING SIGNAL TO THE ISRAELIS FOR YOUR DEMARCHE TO BE MADE AT ALLON'S LEVEL.)

A. THE SECRETARY HAS BEEN FOLLOWING THE SITUATION REGARDING AMOCO'S OPERATIONS IN THE GULF OF SUEZ WITH INCREASING CONCERN. THE INCIDENT ON AUGUST 31, REGARDLESS OF WHO WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE DETAILS, CLEARLY INVOLVED THE THREAT OF ISRAELI FORCE AGAINST A LEGITIMATE AMERICAN DRILLING OPERATION.

B. THE UNITED STATES CAN NOT ACCEPT

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THAT AMOCO WILL BE PREVENTED FROM DRILLING IN A SITE TO

WHICH IT HAS AN UNCONTESTED RIGHT AND WHICH WE FEEL IS OUTSIDE LEGITIMATE ISRAELI JURISDICTION. WE WILL CONTINUE IN OUR EFFORTS TO PROTECT AMOCO'S OPERATION, THEREFORE.

C. THERE IS NO POINT IN ENDEAVORING TO SOLVE THE LEGAL POSITION BETWEEN US. WE MUST DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM AS A POLITICAL ISSUE THAT OUGHT TO BE SOLUBLE ON THAT BASIS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES THAT HAVE THE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE.

D. WE ARE NOT ASKING THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL TO CHANGE ITS POSITION REGARDING THE MEDIAN LINE, EVEN THOUGH WE DISAGREE WITH IT, BUT ONLY TO PERMIT AN AMERICAN FLAG VESSEL, OPERATED BY AN AMERICAN COMPANY, TO OPERATE IN THAT AREA. ISRAEL CAN COMPLETELY RESERVE ITS POSITION ON THE LEGAL ISSUE AND WE WILL NOT COOPERATE IN ANY ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY THE AMOCO DRILLING AS EVIDENCE THAT THE AREA LIES OUTSIDE ISRAELI JURISDICTION. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE FOR AN OCCUPYING POWER TO PERMIT COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES TO GO ON AND TO RESPECT VALID CONCESSIONS. IN FACT, IT IS QUITE NORMAL UNLESS THEY THREATEN THE SECURITY OF THE OCCUPATION. FURTHER SUCH INCIDENTS, WHICH WILL SURELY OCCUR IF THE SITUATION IS NOT CORRECTED, WILL ONLY EXACERBATE U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS. THIS WILL BE PARTICULARLY THE CASE IF THE INCIDENTS BECOME PUBLIC, AS THEY LIKELY WILL AT SOME POINT. ISRAELI PERSISTENCE IN INTERFERENCE WILL CREATE A CONFRONTATION WE SINCERELY WISH TO AVOID.

E. THE SECRETARY WOULD THEREFORE APPRECIATE URGENTLY ISRAEL'S ASSURANCE THAT AMOCO'S OPERATION WILL NOT BE INTERFERED WITH BY ISRAELI NAVAL VESSELS. KISSINGER

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